

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for receiving and forwarding e-mail messages for a subscriber, the system comprising:

a server connected to a network; and

a Mail Alert code set resident and operable on the server;

wherein the MailAlert code set is adapted to compare characteristics of e-mail messages received for the subscriber to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, to alert the subscriber when a characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions received from the subscriber in response to the alert for forwarding of the message received for which a match was found.

2. (Original) A system as in claim 1 wherein the subscriber is alerted on finding a characteristic match by sending a page to a paging device carried by the subscriber.

3. (Original) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a human interface whereby an operator causes received and matched mail to be forwarded to mail addresses provided by the subscriber responding to the alert by conversing with the operator via telephone.

4. (Original) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a telephone menu system whereby a subscriber, responding to an alert, may log in, identify messages, select from recorded options, and input information for forwarding of identified messages.

5. (Currently Amended) An e-mail server comprising:

an e-mail system adapted for receiving and forwarding e-mail; and

a Mail Alert system adapted to compare characteristics of e-mail messages received for the subscriber to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, to alert the subscriber when a characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions received from the subscriber in response to the alert for forwarding of the message received for which a match was found.

6. (Original) An e-mail server as in claim 5 wherein the subscriber is alerted on finding a characteristic match by sending a page to a paging device carried by the subscriber.

7. (Original) An e-mail server as in claim 5 further comprising a human interface whereby an operator causes received and matched mail to be forwarded to mail addresses provided by the subscriber responding to the alert by conversing with the operator via telephone.

8. (Original) An e-mail server as in claim 5 further comprising a telephone menu system whereby a subscriber, responding to an alert, may log in, identify messages, select from recorded options, and input information for forwarding of identified messages.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for receiving, filtering, and routing e-mail messages, comprising steps of:

(a) prerecording on a mail server characteristics for messages to be routed, the characteristics provided by a subscriber;

(b) receiving messages addressed to the subscriber at the mail server;

(c) comparing characteristics of messages received to the prerecorded characteristics provided by the subscriber;

(d) identifying and storing on the mail server messages received for the subscriber for which a match is found to the prerecorded characteristics;

(e) alerting the subscriber to the receipt of one or more messages for which a characteristic match is found; ~~and~~

(f) receiving instructions for forwarding the stored messages from the subscriber in response to the alert; and

(g) forwarding the stored messages for which a match is found to destinations according to the instructions provided by the subscriber in response to the alert.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein, in the alerting step, a page is sent to a pager carried by the subscriber to alert the subscriber to the receipt of the one or more messages.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein, in the forwarding step, an operator enters destinations provided by the subscriber by telephone conversation in response to the alert, and causes the one or more messages to be forwarded.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein, in the forwarding step, a subscriber, in response to the alert, interacts with a phone menu system, identifying messages and selecting destinations for forwarding.

13. (Currently Amended) An agent for processing e-mail messages, comprising:

a stored list of message characteristics provided by a subscriber;

a receiver adapted for receiving e-mail messages and ascertaining message characteristics of the received messages;

a comparator adapted for comparing characteristics of received messages with stored characteristics, and tagging those messages wherein the characteristics match;

an alert mechanism for alerting a subscriber to the receipt of messages having characteristics matching the stored characteristics; and

a save facility adapted for storing matched messages against future distribution instructions, the future distribution instructions received from the subscriber in response to the alert.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 13 wherein the alert mechanism comprises a page transmitter adapted for transmitting a page signal to a pager carried by the subscriber.

16. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 13 further comprising a forwarding facility for retrieving and forwarding stored messages to destinations provided by the subscriber in response to the alert.

17. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises a human interface for identifying messages to be retrieved, retrieving the identified messages, and forwarding the identified messages to destinations provided to an operator by the subscriber.

18. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises an automated telephone menu system adapted for providing choices to a subscriber connecting to the forwarding facility by telephone, wherein the subscriber calling in may identify stored messages to be forwarded, and the agent will retrieve and forward the identified messages to destinations provided by the subscriber calling in response to the alert.

19. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

receiving a message for a subscriber;

comparing the message to criteria;

if the message matches the criteria, then sending an alert to the subscriber;

receiving a reply from the subscriber in response to the alert, the reply comprising instructions for the message; and

processing the message according to the instructions.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the message is an email message.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a notification message that identifies the received message and criteria matching the message.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the comparing step comprises filtering the message to determine if parts of the message meet the criteria.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the criteria are selected from the group consisting of:

message sender information;

message subject line information;

message body information; and

message attachment information.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert comprises at least a portion of the message.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a pager.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a phone.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the instructions comprise a command to forward the message to a new destination.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the new destination is selected from the group consisting of:

an e-mail address;

a fax number;

a telephone number;

a hand-held computer;

a notebook computer;

a server computer; and

an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the reply is received via an entity selected from the group consisting of:

an operator;

a voice-response system;

a telephone call;

an auto attendant; and

a two-way pager.